ABILENE REFLECTOR

—PUBLISHED BY—

REFLECTOR PUBLISHING COMPANY.

CHINESE ASTRONOMY.

Instructive Facts About the Naming of Stars and Constellations.

The Chinese have adopted a system differing considerably from our own as their conception of animals, birds and forms always does. They had two great periods of star naming in ancient China, the first between 2,000 and 3,000 years before Christ and the second about a dozen centuries later. At this early period Chinese astronomers divided the heavens into quarters, containing twenty-eight groups of stars. The quarters are distinguished by the Green Dragon, representing spring and comprising the seven eastern constellations; the Red Bird, or summer, the seven southern constellations; the White Tiger, standing for autumn, the seven western; and the Dark Warriors, the seven northern. This name is also known as the Serpent and sometimes the Tortoise, and it represents winter.

About 1100 B. C. the following points were first brought into prominence in astronomy: The cycle of twelve years, dependent on a revolution of Jupiter; the twelve hours into which the horizon is divided by the pointing of the Bear; the cycles of ten days; the cycle of twenty-eight constellations; the four seasons; the sun, moon and planets. Astrology was most implicitly believed in and was the main object of all Chinese astronomy, as inferences for good or evil were drawn from all astronomical phenomena. The good or evil fortune of the Empire was controlled by the conjunction of the sun and moon. Each province had its presiding star, which foretold its fortunes and was invoked whenever any particular thing required.

The naming of stars after individuals can, in many instances, be traced to this period of Chinese astronomy. Charioteers who were favorites with the Emperors of the people have had their names perpetuated by having them bestowed on groups or on single stars. The name given during the Chow dynasty are generally of an imperial origin instead of the more popular origin characterizing earlier centuries. "The chief ruler of heaven" is the name given to the ancient pole, the star Tai-yi twenty-two degrees from our present pole. The seven stars of the Great Bear are the government rulers of the sun, moon and five planets. The palace of the heavenly emperor is bounded by the oval formed of the fifteen stars of Draco, among which is Tai-yi. The group containing Antares is Ming, t'ang, the council hall of the emperor where he gives laws to his subjects. The adjoining stars are the sons of the Emperor. The palace of the Emperor is Arcturus, toward which the handle of the Dipper almost points, and the two large stars in Centaur, to the south of Saggittarius mark the portals of the south gate of his dominion.

In Cancer and Leo lies the residence of the southern emperor, surrounded by a guard of twelve feudal barons. Between Procyon and Regulus, and between the ecliptic and equator, there is a group called the Willow Branch, which rules over planets and forms the beak of the Red Bird. The constellations of the seven stars adjoins this, forming the neck of the Red Bird; its crop is very appropriately taken to represent the kitchen of the palace; Hydra forms the wings; Y is the imperial holel, where visitors at the place are accommodated; the constellation Corvis finishes the shape of the Red Bird, and is the last in the zodiac.

The seven western constellations are "the lake of fulness," the five reservoirs of heaven, "the home of the five emperors," while Hyades is the "announcer of invasion on the border."

The whole history of Chinese astronomy is full of similar comparisons between the state of the kingdoms of the earth and the heavenly bodies; as an example the pole star is said to be the abode of the Supreme Ruler and the circum-polar stars his court. Colors are ascribed to the different emperors, the white being for west, red for the southern emperor, north for black emperor, and blue for the eastern, and the central inclosure is the court of the yellow emperor, whose essence is called Hau shu-nieu. Within the brilliant circle of the serpent is a star, the "court of the western heaven," the twenty-two stars in the serpent being named after the states into which China was formerly divided. From these facts one is induced to believe that the names were very often first given to constellations and the outlines of the object were afterward traced as far as they possibly could be, the rest being left very much to the strong imagination of the people, whose credulity was played upon by the astrologers of that period to a very considerable degree. —N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

The Provocation Was Great.

"The officers say you attacked and pounded the complaining witness shamefully," said the court, in a tone of severe reproof.

"I acknowledge I used him pretty rough, your Honor," confessed the prisoner. "He stopped me on the street and asked me if my name wasn't Cahokia. I answered him civilly that it wasn't, and then he said he had taken me for a St. Louis Alderman he once met. I couldn't stand that, your Honor. I went for him."

"Prisoner," exclaimed the impulsive Kansas City magistrate, reaching down and wringing his hand warmly, "you are discharged."—Chicago Tribune.

—"Your story, Mr. Winterkill," said the magazine editor to the rising young author, "suits me very well. I observe in it some trivial faults, however. For instance, you describe the heroine's canary as drinking water by 'lapping it up eagerly with her tongue.' Isn't that a peculiar way for a canary to drink water?" "Your criticism surprises me," said Mr. Winterkill in a pained voice. "Still, if you think your readers would prefer it, let the canary drink its water with a teaspoon."—Chicago News.

SUBSTITUTE FOR GLASS.

The Numerous Advantages of the So-Called Wire-Wove Roofing.

The introduction of a material combining all the advantages of glass with none of the corresponding disadvantages arising from its brittleness will be hailed with interest by every class of the public, who suffer daily in one form or another from the fragile nature of the article it is now sought to supersede. The transparent wire-wove roofing, which is translucent, pliable as leather, and unbreakable, has for its basis a web of fine iron wire, with warp and weft threads about one-twelfth of an inch apart. This netting is covered on both sides with a thick translucent varnish, containing a large percentage of linseed oil. The process of manufacture is conducted by dipping the sheets into deep tanks containing the composition until the required thickness is obtained; the sheets are then dried in a heated chamber, and after being stored for some time till thoroughly set, are ready for use. The sheets can be made any color desired, and range from amber to pale brown. The roofing is very pliable; and bending backwards and forwards without any injury, readily adapts itself to curves or angles in roofing. The new material is not only waterproof, but is unaffected by steam, the heat of the sun, frost, hail, rain, or indeed atmospheric changes of any kind. Being a non-conductor, buildings, winter-gardens and similar structures remain cool in summer and warm in winter. Owing to its lightness as compared with glass —only half a pound per square foot— considerable economy in the iron or timber framing designed to carry it can be secured, whilst saving in carriage is obtained in addition to safety.

Turning now to the question of cost. Wire-wove roofing is more expensive in first cost than ordinary glass; but the many advantages, both in erection and maintenance, already set forth will, in the opinion of those interested in the question, more than counterbalance the primary additional outlay. A material that requires no glazing, can be cut with scissors and fixed with zinc nails, is an economical one to erect. For churches, passages, staircases, special colored varieties to simulate glass similarly prepared are manufactured. Both the Admiralty and War Office have availed themselves of the advantages to be derived from the employment of the new roofing material; whilst it may be added that the Royal Aquarium at Westminster is entirely covered with it.

A list of the many and varied uses to which the wire-wove roofing may be applied would be a long one; amongst others, may be mentioned: Roofs of cotton mills, explosive and other factories, workshops of all classes, breweries, printing-works, railway stations, exhibitions, cricket pavilions, lawn-tennis courts, verandas, porches and covered ways, boathouses, engine-room skylights, conservatories, ferneries, garden-frames and summer-houses, kiosks, stables, loose-boxes for horses and cattle, barns, cowhouses and shepherds' houses, pheasantries, poultry-runs, fowl-houses and kennels, skylights, markets, schools, laundries, portable buildings, temporary structures, hospital and military huts, and all other buildings requiring to be light and dry.—Chambers' Journal.

FACTS ABOUT SHIRTS.

Devises Calculated to Reduce the Laundry Bills of Bachelors.

As the shirt industry grew and expanded the garment itself became the subject of much mental exercise, and the result is that there are more than three hundred patents on various devices pertaining to the garment and covering every part of it from the neck-band to the tail. Most of these are designed to add to the comfort of the wearer, the strength of the shirt, and the income of the inventor, and are of no particular interest to the general reader. One of the most singular of these inventions is a contrivance to cheat the laundress, called the "multi-bosom," consisting of one body and many bosoms, either detachable or otherwise. A man in Boston built a shirt with many bosoms so arranged that when one was soiled it could be dropped down below the waist and a clean front exposed to view. It is suggested in the Haber-dasher, from which this information is obtained, that this shirt should be accompanied by an automatic portable laundry, operated by the legs of the wearer so that the dropped bosom could be "done up" while not in use. Another man has produced a combination shirt made of flannel with an extra bosom of linen, which is made to appear on unbuttoning a flap, and a Chicago man has secured a patent on a shirt to which extra bosoms are attached by buttons. The notched neckband is a patented device and consists in cutting V-shaped notches in the top of the band, thus permitting it to spread or contract to fit collars of different sizes. Another patent was issued recently on a shirt open all the way down the back and front—a shirt in two halves; and still another on the open shoulder, which has not yet become popular. There are also a number of patents on sleeve adjusters, most of which consist of a system of buttons and straps to regulate the length of the sleeve.

The linen for American shirts comes entirely from Ireland. It is said that the United States can never become a competitor in this domain for th reason that it can not grow the proper quality of flax and that the extremes of climate prevent perfect bleaching. Ireland is the world's best bleaching ground. Nearly all the muslin used in the trade is manufactured in the mills of New York and the New England States, the Southern mills supplying only the heavy fabrics known as "cotton linings."—Chicago Tribune.

—In recently issued tables giving statistics on the subject of divorce, our country leads in having granted nearly half a million divorces during the twenty years past, but there have been only eleven divorces throughout the length and breadth of Erin during that period. Protestant or Catholic, in happiness or in abuse, the Irish continue the partnership until it is dissolved by death.

OFFICIAL SALARIES.

Why the Suggestions of an Increase Can Not Be Favorably Received.

The resignation of Senator Chace, of Rhode Island, has revived the chronic question of official salaries. Senator Chace assigns as the reason for his resignation that the compensation of a Senator is not sufficient to justify him in longer neglecting business. He is a large manufacturer, and has business interests that require and will repay attention. This is not the case with all Senators, and still less with all Representatives, but it will probably furnish occasion for reviving the old question of an increase of salaries. There never yet was a legislative body that would not increase the pay of its members if it could and dared to do so. The average Congressman or legislator's plan of economy always begins somewhere else than in the body of which he is a member. He is ever ready to vote extra pay and big perquisites to all the employes of the body, on the ground that they are "faithful and overworked public servants," and is always hankering after an increase for himself on the same imaginary ground. Some Congressmen are faithful, and a few may be overworked, but the majority do not suffer in either direction.

The question of official salaries is one of some importance, and should be considered on its merits and settled on a just basis. The salaries of Senators, Representatives and Government officials should be sufficient to secure and fairly reward the services of first-rate men, and yet not so large as to make them a source of wealth. They should be adequate to the comfortable and genteel maintenance of a family in good average style, with a reasonable margin beyond for those economically inclined, but they should not be such as to justify or encourage any official in aping the style of moneyed aristocracy or trying to keep up with the social dance led by millionaires. In short, official salaries should be fair to the verge of liberality, but they should not be exorbitant nor out of proportion to the services rendered by office-holders, nor to what persons of equal ability earn in private life. It has never been the policy of this Government to pay high salaries, and never should be; it should pay enough to secure the services of good men and to support them like gentlemen, but not like nabobs.

Recurring to the matter of Congressmen's salaries, we do not believe the suggestion of an increase will be favorably received by the country. This is an era of rather hard times and close living, and the average citizen who works hard and lives close, and lies awake nights, to make his $2,000 or $3,000 a year, will be slow to understand why a Congressman, who receives three times as much, should need an increase. The people know the average Congressman is well paid now. While some may be worth more to the country, and could earn more in private life, the majority could not. The plea of hard work and poor pay does not go. The average Congressman does not work half as hard as the average business man, and has a great many more pleasures. The midnight oil which he burns is not burned in hard study nor in poring over ledgers and account books. Neither is the expense of living in Washington any reason for an increase of salaries. Congressmen of moderate means who go to Washington are not obliged to imitate the style of living or the expensive habits of millionaires. After all is said, if they find their compensation inadequate, they always have the North American privilege of resigning and giving some other fellow a chance to starve. There is no law requiring a man to seek or hold office, and Congressmen who think the people elect them to increase their own salaries will find themselves greatly mistaken.—Indianapolis Journal.

DRIFT OF OPINION.

☞The Republican victory last fall meant not only a stronger protective defense for the Republic's industries but a better handling of its pocket-book as well—a consideration of almost equal importance.—Troy (N. Y.) Times.

☞The day for the spoils theory, that the more people are plundered and cheated by unnecessarily numerous office-holders and official "snaps" the better, is gone, and the clock has struck twelve at midnight.—N. Y. Press.

☞The first appointments made by President Cleveland four years ago caused almost universal condemnation. Those made so far by President Harrison are classed as "all good men." This is the difference between a statesman and a politician for Chief Magistrate. —Baltimore American.

☞Chauncey M. Depew received a call a few days ago from a man who is after an office under the new administration. "I am an office-seeker, Mr. Depew," said the visitor. "Are you?" exclaimed the post-prandial orator, looking at the speaker in feigned astonishment. "I never saw one before."—Chicago Journal.

☞The men who murdered Clayton were probably some worthless country fellows who had been taught that assassination was a legitimate political argument. Their ignorance is not an excuse, but it is a question if they are any more guilty than the pharisaical free-traders, who eagerly accepted the fruit of their crimes and then sought to shield the perpetrators by shouting "bloody shirt."—N. Y. Press.

Five Timely Suggestions.

We desire to suggest to certain Democratic contemporaries who are exciting themselves concerning the formation of a salt trust that it would be well to wait and see if:

1. There is a salt trust.
2. Whether its founders and factors are not out and out free traders.
3. If it increase the price of salt.
4. If it doesn't get smashed into such universal smithereens as the once talked-of copper trust now lies in.
5. If protectionist newspapers do not aid in the smashing process.—Chicago Inter Ocean

THE CONSULAR SERVICE.

Why None But Devoted Protectionists Should Represent American Commerce.

The President's declared intention of acting slowly in the matter of consular appointments is praiseworthy. The consular department is one in which it is needful that there should be a "clean sweep," or pretty nearly so, of all the present incumbents, and that for very plain and very satisfactory reasons. Consuls and consular agents are not mere routine officials; it is possible that merely clerical duties may be fulfilled by a Democrat under a Republican administration or by a Republican under a Democrat without detriment to the policy of the party in power, but it is not possible that a free trader can serve a protectionist party in an office in which he is free to express his opinions as an official, and to impress such opinions upon the public mind by the weight of official position. The consular reports are educational documents, and it is not to be thought of that they shall be written and edited by free traders under a protectionist administration. The country has declared that its policy, for the next four years at any rate, shall be protectionist, and the working out of such a policy can not be intrusted to free traders who are all but unchecked in the exercise of great official powers.

The most insidious pleas for a return to free-trade policy which have been made during the past four years have been furnished by Consuls of Mr. Cleveland's appointment. These agents of America have been doing English trade good and American trade evil service. They have been, for the most part, faithful friends of the European exporter and treacherous guardians of the interests of American manufacturers and agriculturists. It is desirable that the consular service shall be reorganized with the utmost speed consistent with safety. But it should be borne in mind that safety lies in replacing the old free-trade leaven by active protectionist principles. A Consul under a Republican administration should be a man of well-developed intelligence, methodical in habit, shrewd in investigation, and full of devotion to the American idea of protection to American industries and American citizens. —Chicago Inter Ocean.

INEXCUSABLE CRIMES.

The Southern Outrage Mill as Busily at Work as Ever.

Since the Kemper County outrages in Mississippi there has been a lull in the bloody business of killing unoffending negroes, but the horrible work now seems to have broken out afresh in that section. The Starkville (Miss) Times contains the details of the killing of D. H. Smith, a negro labor agent, whose only offense was the engagement of laborers near Artesia for Arkansas planters. The cowardly mob followed him up and without warning shot him in the back. An inquest was held and the jury in its verdict specified by name all those who were concerned in the dastardly deed, but at last accounts no one was arrested, and it is safe to say no one will be, though we are treated to the customary assurance that "the people of Artesia and vicinity as law-abiding citizens no doubt will see that the law is upheld and justice meted out."

The Jasper Eagle contains the details of another atrocious crime. A man named L. R. Smith, professing to be a detective from Aberdeen, arrested an innocent negro near Jasper, who, he claimed, was wanted for complicity in a recent murder. He was allowed to take the negro away with him, carrying him off into the woods and cutting off one of his ears, which he proposed to carry to Birmingham and offer as evidence to secure the reward which had been declared. After doing this he deliberately shot the negro and left him. The victim dragged himself to the nearest house and died there, but not before he had told his dreadful story and proved that he was not the murderer for whom the reward had been offered. We are also informed in this case that public sentiment will demand the arrest and punishment of Smith, but beyond the fact that the public were vastly amused at his claiming a reward by the exhibition of his victim's ear no steps have been taken to vindicate justice, and as in the other case it is safe to assume none will be. It is only another negro killed, and negroes don't count for much in Mississippi.—Chicago Tribune.

ODIOUS COMPARISONS.

The Unparalleled Extravagance of the Cleveland Administration.

The New York Sun has been making some comparisons of rather an odious sort to its own political party. It has compiled and published a list of the appropriations granted by Congress during each of the administrations from Grant down to Cleveland, both inclusive, as follows:

Forty-third Congress—Grant	$302,732,698
Forty-fourth Congress—Grant	212,478,993
Forty-fifth Congress—Hayes	335,077,422
Forty-sixth Congress—Hayes	335,409,840
Forty-seventh Congress—Garfield-Arthur	429,339,683
Forty-eighth Congress—Arthur	308,050,510
Forty-ninth Congress—Cleveland	402,695,243
Fiftieth Congress—Cleveland	588,864,239

The Sun calls particular attention to the fact, clearly in sight in the above list of figures, that "the appropriations by the two Congresses that sat during Cleveland's administration were nearly twice as great as the two Congresses in Grant's second term." The Tribune would call particular attention to the fact that the appropriations by the Fiftieth Congress, under Cleveland, were $73,652,548 more than those of the Forty-third and Forty-fourth Congresses under Grant.

In other words, during the four years of Cleveland's administration, or Democracy in power, it cost a vast amount more money to run the Government than it did during any previous administration referred to above. In view of these facts the Democratic watchword of "retrenchment and reform" doesn't seem to sound as sweetly to the public tympanum as it might. It shows that the Democratic party is strong in promises and very weak in performances. Hereafter when it talks about Republican extravagance it will be "confronted by a condition" and its own recent record. And that will be enough.—Detroit Tribune.

FARM AND FIRESIDE.

—Water under foot is a great detriment to sheep-growing, and hence in wet seasons the flocks have to be watched closely. Foul foot is seldom known in a hilly country.

—Where fertilizers must be bought to keep up or improve the land, hog growers will in many instances find it profitable to buy their fertilizers in the shape of feed, such as the mill products and oil meal.—Swineherd.

—There will be no danger of a variety of potatoes "running out" if the best tubers are saved for seed every year. Every one who plants potatoes can improve the variety by carefully selecting the seed and giving good cultivation.

—Oats and onions are two crops that, as a rule, ought to be ready to go in the ground just as soon as the condition of the soil will admit. If this is done, it will be quite an item to make the necessary preparations in advance, so that at the proper time the work can be pushed along as rapidly as possible.

—Tomato Soup: Heat one quart of canned tomatoes with one pint of water to the boiling point, then add one small teaspoonful soda. As soon as they cease to foam add one pint rich milk, two tablespoonfuls butter and a little salt and pepper. Serve as soon as it boils up again. With fresh oyster crackers it makes an excellent dish.

—Just as many dairymen and other cow-owners can not tell, with a reasonable degree of certainty, which of their cows are sources of profit, and which of loss, so many farmers can not certainly tell whether they gain or lose by this or that crop. Would it not pay to pay a little more attention to this matter? Might it not be as wise to cull one's crops as to cull one's cows.

—Illy ventilated quarters and the absence of sun and light exert a powerful influence on the health of fowls. Without fresh air, sun and light, fowls would become like plants in a cellar, pale and sickly, unproductive and unprofitable. If every avenue by which the pure air of heaven can reach them is closed, they would stifle to death by fetid vapors, or else become the victims of disease.—Western Plowman.

—Corned Beef Soup: Let seven pounds of cheapest cut of corned beef be soaked and parboiled so as to remove the surplus salt, then simmer slowly three hours. Let the liquor stand until all the fat rises. Skim off the fat. Add a quart of tomatoes, two carrots, two small white turnips, two onions and four large potatoes, all pared and sliced thin. Let simmer one hour. Strain and serve the soup hot, reserving the cooked vegetables for a salad.

SELECTING A FARM.

Things That Should Not Be Overlooked by Purchasers of Land.

In buying a farm for a family home, two things are so frequently overlooked and are of so much importance that we would impress them upon the reader. The first is the drainage about the dwelling house. No family can be healthy and happy unless its dwelling is situated on a spot whence the drainage is good. On not a few farms the dwelling has been located where the drainage is very poor and can not be much improved. The person who located the house may not have cared for drainage, or may have thought of greater moment the advantage of a location near a spring, or grove of trees, or something else. No fertility of the land or "bargain" by reason of low price will justify a man putting himself and family in a dwelling from which the drainage is imperfect. Sickness and death, with the attendant suffering and expense, will make the farm a bad bargain, no matter how low the price or fertile the land.

The other thing is the intellectual and moral character of the neighborhood; for no man can afford that he and his family live among unintelligent, immoral people. To no small extent your neighbors will mold the characters of your children; if you would have bright, intelligent, respectable children you must have neighbors of the same sort. In the country we must look to our neighbors for social intercourse; and, unless they are as they should be, we must live like hermits, or associate with people whose companionship is uninteresting while it is harmful. Land in a good neighborhood may cost somewhat more, but it is nevertheless the cheaper. Land where there are not good people, and the good roads, schools, churches and books that these people will have, is always too dear for a wise man to buy. It is also worth while to take care to get near church and school-house. One-fourth of a mile further from church and school-house means many miles more travel every year for your children, sometimes when the winds are fierce and cold, or the snow is deep; sometimes, also, the children may be kept altogether from school or church for many precious days. These things merit the consideration in buying a new home.—American Agriculturist.

Fertilizing Sweet Potatoes.

The year of 1888 has been one of varied farm experiments at our place. I will give the result of one in sweet-potato growing: I "penned" two pieces of land side by side about of equal size. In one pen I daily composted the droppings of cattle with the soil. In the other I followed the common practice of the country in simply surface penning, then plowing in the manure and ridging up for sweet potatoes. In the pen where the manure was daily picked up and composted it was not spaded over before using, though that would have made it finer, but was simply taken out and dropped from a basket along in rows before ridging up for the potatoes. About equal amounts of manure was used for each pen; no fertilizer was used for either, save the droppings of the cattle, and the ashes from the burning of palmetto roots and bushes when the land was cleared, which was about equal in each pen. Six different varieties of sweet potatoes were tried in each pen. Results as follows: The land planted from the composted fertilizer yielded at least three times as many potatoes as that treated in the common way of simply penning. —Florida Farmer and Fruit Grower.